

Tyler Junior College News

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TJC 4 cent tax increase faces strong opposition

By Aaron May
Page Editor

In August, the TJC Board of Trustees approved a four cent tax increase to help pay for building projects over the next 10 years. The increase raises the TJC District tax rate from 12.23 cents to 16.23 cents per \$100 evaluation on land values. It has drawn opposition in the form of a petition to rollback the Board's action.

Over 10 years, the increase is estimated to provide approximately \$167 million in funds, \$40 million in new taxes, to the college. The money from the additional four cents will be set aside and leveraged with contributions from private parties to pay cash for building projects.

Unlike the process of taking out tax bonds and loans as college trustees have done for previous building projects, "this new plan will cut costs to the school up to 50 percent,"

TJC President Dr. William Crowe said.

TJC marketing and public information director Fred Peters said revenue from the tax increase is merely an estimate based on averages from the past decade. It is virtually impossible to predict exactly how much money will actually come in because land valuations can fluctuate widely.

A petition drive for a public recall election is underway, led by Tyler physician, Dr. Ken Haygood, a TJC district taxpayer. Haygood pointed out that TJC is allowed to raise taxes up to 3 percent without involving the community. Increasing taxes four cents is a 33 percent increase, Haygood said. "A tax increase of such magnitude should be brought to the public in an election."

"We believe an issue of such importance deserves a

community discussion," Haygood said.

TJC has made its plans known to the public. "The law requires that TJC run a set size ad in the most circulated paper in the region, in this case the Tyler Morning Telegraph," Peters said. In addition to the ad, a series of 10 stories have been published explaining the tax increase and construction plans.

The law also requires a public hearing at which members of the public can hear the proposal and respond. Only three persons attended this hearing Aug. 12. One spoke in favor of the increase, one was opposed and the third chose not to speak.

Haygood opposes the increase because he believes it is unnecessary.

"New taxes will affect the community negatively by taking money from those who

need it most," he said.

This is the first tax rate change in 11 years and TJC has no immediate need for these funds, Haygood said. "Why all of a sudden?" he questioned.

Dr. Crowe said in the past taking out tax bonds and loans to pay for building projects has led to increased tuition costs in order to re-pay those debts. With that process, the overall cost is higher in the long run because of the interest. Raising the tax now "will prevent more higher taxes later," Crowe said.

In a Faculty Senate survey 74 TJC faculty voted. Of those, 85 percent favor the increase, 3 percent oppose it, 8 percent wished to remain neutral and 3 percent said they had no response.

Some believe that the tax increase will have a negative effect on seniors because the

tax rate freeze takes affect in January, 2005. Peters said the TJC Board never discussed this proposition in regards to the tax increase.

In fact, Peters said, TJC had to make the decision for the tax increase by the August end of the fiscal year. TJC couldn't lock seniors' rates before the increase if they wanted to.

Deadline for the recall petition is Nov. 23 with 8,600 signatures of registered voters in the TJC tax district required for the recall election to take place.

We already have two-thirds of the needed signatures and feel confident that we will get enough in time, Dr. Haygood said.

For more information on the tax increase, visit www.tjc.edu/tax.

Phildius advises students about debt elimination

By Brooke Langston
Staff Writer

Debt elimination consultant Keith Phildius said he likes to speak to college students because he hears too many say they heard his information too late.

"Most people at my seminars say the needed to have known the information around 10 to even 20 years earlier," Phildius, the first Student Enrichment speaker, told his TJC audience Oct. 19.

Phildius shared some conventional financial wisdom: "build a six-month emergency fund, invest 10 percent of your income and do not pay off your mortgage first."

"Out of 100 people reaching the age of 65, only four percent reach financial freedom," Phildius said. The word "mortgage" he said, actually translates to "death grip." Because home mortgagees represent 93 percent of Americans' debt, most would say that definition is accurate.

"Finances are the No. 1 cause of divorce," he said.

Phildius explained some mortgage myths also. The three reasons people don't pay off their mortgage are: 1. it's cheap money, 2. they get a tax deduction and 3. they can't get a better return on their money

elsewhere.

"The rate is not as important as the interest cost," he advised. The average family moves every 5-7 years, so mortgage payments become devoted to interest instead of principle because most families are always in the beginning stages of home financing.

The average American family is \$170,000 in debt. It would take 28 years to pay that off, but with his system, it can be paid off in eight years.

Phildius advised setting an order to pay, "lowest balance to highest."

By following the IYD sys-

tem, "you get immediate results," he said, and "interest saved is interest earned."

To seize your savings, Phildius advises: open a free checking account at another bank, refuse the ATM card, setting up direct deposit of pay from your employer, refuse the check book and only use online banking.

"Holding on to debts can cost you your future," Phildius said.

Jamie Wood, 22, of Tyler took note when Phildius advised paying off the smallest debt first. Wood said this information "will help me get

my debts paid off." Wood said she is in debt "a little bit, by probably a couple thousand" and hopes to pay it off by working. She attended the seminar because her instructor required it.

MLT major Caitlin Alcorn of Tyler was surprised to hear Phildius say to pay the smaller debt off first. "Knowing this will help me get rid of my debt." Alcorn is in debt by a couple thousand dollars, she said, which she plans to pay off by working. She came to the seminar because her instructor required it.

Nikki Carter, MLT major

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Students dislike more tests, but THEA offers benefits

By Brooke Langston
Staff Writer

One word almost all college students have come to dislike is THEA, Texas Higher Education Assessment. THEA affects all students, sending many to enroll in college preparatory classes.

TJC's policy is that students cannot move up to the next class until they pass one of three tests. A legal change

revised this rule last year: students must pass either the THEA, the Accuplacer or the final exam.

Dr. Deborah Kelley, college preparatory studies department chair advised, "It's difficult to have all your eggs in one basket. The THEA is free so take it and don't stress, because you have another chance."

Students should check with their academic adviser to determine if they are exempt from the test before they decide to take it," Kelly said. Students can gain exemption through TAAS and/or SAT scores, but a 3.5 high school GPA no longer can exempt them. For example, those who already have a college degree or are in military service are exempt.

Allied Health Programs require students to take and pass all three portions of THEA.

The Accuplacer is different from THEA. The Accuplacer, given everyday on a computer, is an adaptive test. This means that it decides whether you "go up or down."

THEA is a timed paper and pencil test. Students have five hours to complete the test. They

can choose to take one or all parts or skip around, because there is no set order. Each test section is composed of about 40-50 multiple-choice questions. The writing section also requires that they write an essay of about 300 to 600 words.

"You have total control over the THEA," Dr. Kelley said.

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Colleges to send reps to advise students

TJC's annual "University Morning College Fair" will be open from 9 to 11 a.m. Nov. 15 for students to meet representatives from other colleges and universities. Many of these institutions will also be present at the University Fair from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Oil Palace. For more information visit www.tylercollegefair.com

Wagstaff Gym will re-open Nov. 20

Wagstaff Gymnasium will re-open with a celebration of renovations ribbon cutting at 12:30 p.m. Nov. 20. Lunch for those who have pre-registered and a basketball game will follow the ribbon cutting. To make reservations call 903-510-2520 by Nov. 17.



Campus Path Drive now collecting foods

The TJC PATH Food Drive is now underway with green collection boxes in all classroom buildings. It started Nov. 1 and will last till Nov. 22. Each Friday afternoon, food will be taken to PATH by volunteers.

In the first week, Potter Hall led in contributions with 33 bags of food, one-fourth of the 139 bags collected, History Instructor Geoffrey Willbanks said.

Hooten to speak about Milky Way

Hudnall Planetarium Director Tom Hooten will explain "our place in the Milky Way" at the public astronomy lecture at 7 p.m. Nov. 20 in Apache Room 4, Rogers Student Center. Advanced tickets are required and may be purchased in the Cashier's Office in White Administrative Services Center. Tickets cost \$3 for adults and \$2 for students. After the lecture the Astronomical Society will host their monthly Star Party.

PTK donates 89 coats

Phi Theta Kappa collected coats for Coats For Kids during the month of Oct. and collected 89 coats. Those coats were donated to children who otherwise would not have had a coat during the cold winter months.

Faculty display art in Wise Gallery

Art works created by the TJC art faculty will be displayed in Wise Gallery until Nov. 19.

The works include paintings, drawings, printmaking, sculptures, ceramics, installations, collages and weaving.

The Gallery, adjacent to Wise Auditorium is open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Friday. Admission is free.

Students to open 'Scrooge' Nov. 17

Students from the Speech and Theater and Music and Dance departments will present the musical "Scrooge" Nov. 17-20 in Wise Auditorium. All performances open at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets cost \$5 and early reservations can be made by calling the TJC Theater Box Office at 903-510-2212 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Tyler Junior College News

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Separation can bring families together

By Job Martinez
Guest Columnist

To most college students leaving home can be a scary thing. It is not easy to just pack up and leave; maybe it never will be. This marked occasion also includes saying good-bye to the people and places that, through the years, we have come to hold dearly. And although our belongings now occupy the new dorm or apartment, do we really settle in? Or is college simply a pit stop 50 miles into the long journey?

Eerily enough, for the first time in my entire life, the redundant views possessed by my parents began to make sense. After 18 years of living together, my parents and I have finally gotten to know one another. Living in a society of definite roles prevents people from becoming familiar with each other on an individual basis.

A majority of young adults today have an estranged relationship with their parents. Pulling away from home can often strengthen the bonds between families. It does not take long to realize that we need them just as much as they need us. After I left for college my parents no longer felt the need to exercise their authority to the maximum extent of the law; they just wanted their son to come home.

Even in the smallest families there exists a sense of presence. Being away has a habit of filling students with a newfound appreciation for the family they have. I no longer view my parents as the statistical blue-collar workers stiff with whom I waged war for so many years. They are now people with fears and insecurities, burdens as well as pressures, not to mention mistakes and regrets. This sudden change in relationships can often make us want

"Pulling away from home can often strengthen the bonds between families."

to return to take full advantage of a fresh start.

A large portion of teens presently departing for college, leave their homes wounded. Many vow to never return, but deep inside something is still missing. People in that circumstance usually feel like they are running from their problems.

As Edmund Burke once put it, "you can never plan the future by the past." Taking off is not always the best solution. An unresolved situation can often lead to deep depression. Students facing this problem do not really leave home, because they continue to be emotionally submerged in the hostile environment.

Although I am not witnessing my parent's current separation, it is a load that I carry. Being distanced from the ordeal has helped put everything into perspective, but it cannot be escaped, regardless of my futile attempts. Finding peace will require confrontation, not so much of what has happened, but with the acceptance of it.

Even more difficult are the constant changes that occur, a feat most college students have not previously experi-

enced. We fear change because it is unpredictable. No one really knows what is going to happen next.

Graduation is a tough time for a large part of the college-bound senior class. Never have so many decisions fallen on any of us. I had found myself at a crossroads with no discernible path in mind. The freedom to make my own choices had now become a burden. I was terrified!

Walking into an admissions office meant deciding right then and there what pattern to follow for the rest of my life. Then as I sat down before an admissions counselor, choosing a major began to feel like ordering from a menu. Not everyone has the ability to plan out the next 10 years of their life. Always questioning a decision can be mortifying. Dr. Joseph Filipowski, my senior English teacher, said people get so accustomed to routine that changes in function, especially freedom of choice, frequently leave us with indecision. Nothing seems to make sense and the only good remedy would be to take things one step at a time.

At a time when parting ways appears to be increasingly difficult, only one thing is certain: nothing is ever going to be the same. "Home" becomes defined by a four-room monument in honor of memories and faded pictures, while the last departing words bring closing to another chapter. Being afraid is part of what makes us human. Ironically, this is not a one-time thing. Similar types of overwhelming stress reoccur in different stages of life. Not every little detail will have a logical explanation, but taking things one step at a time can make a world of difference.

Voters speak: Majority oppose tax increase

By Aaron May
Page Editor

TJC commissioned Rincon & Associates to conduct a phone survey of registered voters in the TJC tax district about the tax increase the TJC Board of Trustees approved in August. The survey polled a randomly selected 400 registered voters who have voted in the past two elections, either local or national. The questions asked about the

people's awareness of the school, the proposed tax increase, whether they supported it or not and why.

The survey revealed a large opposition to the tax increase, with 62.7 percent opposed, 12.7 percent in favor and 24.5 percent unsure.

Those in favor of the increase cited School improvement, support and improvement to education as primary reasons for their position. Those opposed

said the taxes are already too high and there are too many taxes with questionable benefits.

The 400 people surveyed represented registered voters from a variety of demographic backgrounds and responses were similar across the board.

Rincon & Associates concluded many are opposed to the increase because they do not see the benefits.

The report stated, "The study find-

ings clearly point to the need to develop an effective campaign to inform voters in the tax district about the importance of the tax increase and its benefits to both TJC and the community that it serves. The strong opposition among these registered voters to tax increases, especially a 32.7 percent increase, will likely fuel the momentum for a roll-back initiative."

TJC talent show introduces gifted students

By Hassan Dean
Staff Writer

Some people have extraordinary talents which audiences enjoy on television shows like "Ripley's Believe It or Not" and "American Idol." Talented TJC students performed at a recent Talent Contest in Wise Auditorium.

Competing in two categories, amateur and professional, for groups or clubs that meet twice a week and students with performance grants, their acts varied from country singers to Hacky sack exhibitionists. The Apache

Belles, Cheerleaders, and Apache Band competed as professionals. All others competed for amateur prizes. Most were TJC students.

"Xclusive," a break dancing group, won first place in amateur category and a \$300 prize. Everyone in the group is talented, some dancing better than others, some "stalling" better. Xclusive includes Carson Whightly, Carl, Flip and B-Mo.

Whightly, 18, who wants to attend Texas A&M University next semester said, "...It was fun. It was a good turn-

out, and the audience participation was awesome."

Ryan Thomas won the \$200 second prize. A tennis tech major from Bandwinnville, NY, Thomas skillfully kicked a Hacky sack. He is considered a professional at this rapidly growing sport.

He said he was happy with the turnout, "The crowd didn't really intimidate me. I've been in front of big crowds at Hacky sack competitions," he said. Thomas, who started this sport three years ago, is 2003 East Coast Interme-

diate Champion.

Third place, \$100, went to Debra Oliver, who sang "Weak in the Knees."

In the professional category, the \$300 first prize went to Dustin Felcman, who sang "Someone Else's Star."

Second place, \$200, went to the TJC Cheerleading Squad for their stunt routine.

Third and \$100 went to Harmony and Understanding for "Ease on Down the Road."

Teacher Feature

Cross, passionate about history, tells American story

By Rachael Riley
Page Editor

As you walk into history instructor Linda Cross' small office it is evident that history is her passion. Books fill the walls, a helmet rests on the filing cabinet and a rocking chair adds a touch of comfort.

Cross has taught the American story here for 30 years after a year as a graduate teaching assistant at Stephen F. Austin State University.

She earned bachelor's and master's degrees in history at SFASU and has done post-graduate work at the University of North Texas.

Cross said her favorite teaching style is to "lecture and turn it into a story that students can understand. I also like student feedback and involvement in class."

"There is nothing difficult about



Photo By Rachael Riley

Linda Cross History Department Chair and has taught at TJC for three decades.

teaching. History is an easy subject to talk about. I like to apply history to today and students' lives," she said.

Teaching has brought Cross many other opportunities. She works with historical societies and other community organizations. One current effort

is the Veterans Project.

"In 1974, when Vietnam ended, I started to interview veterans about their wartime experiences," she said.

"In 2000, Congress passed a law to set up the Veterans Project and in 2003 TJC adopted the project. Some veterans from all wars are now interviewed each week. Their interviews are sent to the Library of Congress and published on their website.

"When they walk away, they are glad they did it. I think both family members and research will benefit from the interviews," Cross said.

Teaching has brought her many rewards as well. "It's fun and you get to play all day. I'm proud that I don't have a big drop rate, and that students will put forth effort to stick with the class when they sometimes struggle with it," she said.

"It's well worth it to have a student come back and say they are now interested in history," she said. "You get to make lifelong friends with students. It's funny to get a (former) student's child or grandchild who wants to take me because their parents did."

"I am rich because of the many relationships I've made, and of course, the pay is just wonderful too," she said.

"It is also rewarding to hear students laugh in class or become really serious when current events are discussed. It shows that they are understanding what is being said. I remember when students watched the events on 9/11 and became serious realizing history was being made," she said.

Teaching has no downsides "except maybe learning how to use a com-

Phildius

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from Tyler, learned from Phildius to pay off debt in smallest to largest order and to pay off your mortgage, not to hang on to it. Carter thinks the information will help her know how to manage her money better. "I'm married and trying to settle into life," she said.

She is in debt by several thousand dollars and hopes to pay it off with the help of a consolidation company and "by doing what he says," Carter said. Her instructor required attending the presentation.

After Phildius' presentation, speech major Cody Crawford said, "I'm pretty

young, but this might be useful for me down the line. I'm not worried about it right now. No, I'm not (in debt) and I don't plan to be," he said. He attended because his instructor required it.

Sophomore Clark Logan, 19, said, "It is useful to me because he talked about things that I did not even know about and I'm sure others didn't know about (them) either. I about a couple of hundred dollars in debt. I plan to use his methods," Logan said.

"I came because it was teacher required, but soon after sitting down, I became very interested," Logan said.

Vincent Johnson contributed to this story

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Phi Theta Kappa inducts 137

Phi Theta Kappa added 137 new members in their fall induction Oct. 17 date.

To be eligible for be the junior college honor society, students must have completed 12 hours and maintained at least a 3.5 grade point average.

Inductees are: Adam Algor, Jami Algor, Dawn Allison, Joe Anders, Sharon Andreason, Christine Arrington, Derek Arrington, Kayla Ballewske, John Bennett, Steven Bothwell, Christine Bradford, Patricia Burris, Stephen Cates, Alice Cates and Kevin Shampang.

Others are: Charlton Colum, Ashlie Contos, Joshua Conway, Christina Coursey, Cody Crawford, Melissa Crossley, Regina Crowell, Mark Davidson, Tanya Dewberry, Amanda Downey, Kathy Drinning, Kelly Dry, Laurie Fisher, Dee Fister and Jesus Flores.

Others are: Steven Ford, Matthew Franzen, Sherry Frey, Annette Frost, Alexandra Funk, Jason Furr, Maria Garcia, Austin Gatlin, Jennifer Gholson, Lydia Giles, Donald Graham, Sharon Gutierrez, Mary Gwin, Gretchen Haggerty and Erin Hamm.

Also inducted are:

Jacqueline Hammond, Andrew Harris, Catherine Hart, Jaclyn Hatchell, Jennifer Henson, Elizabeth Hickey, Katherine Hicks, Katelyn Hoff, Jo Horton, Brandye Hughes, Jeremy Irwin, Rachel Johnson, Leigh Kirkpatrick, Krystal Kirkpatrick and Ashley Koonce.

Others inducted are: Cassie Lake, Melissa Lamborn, Joseph Laxson, Brinda Lekhray, Maravilla Leon, Sharon Lewin, Tamara Lightfoot, Jodi Lilly, Alan Lott, Mary Marler, Shelby Martin, Marlen Martinez, Quentin Matlock, Grant McFarland, Christopher McCawley and Nicole McCoy.

Other new inductees are:

Tamera McGaugh, Meshelle McHam, Elica McKeethan, Tina Mergerson, Amanda Metcalf, Randy Meyer, Mary Miller, Zoila Mojarro, Jason Morris, Christina Murphey, Kristopher Newman, Orlyndo Nogra, Tiffanie Noland, Carol O'Quinn, Ashlie Osburn and Holly Palmer.

Also inducted are: Ellie Paterson, Rachel Pipak, Sarah Pittman, Starla Pittman, Sabrina Priddy, Julie Procell, Lupita Ramirez, Shelby Rhyne, Ashley Rice, Aaron Roberts, Anna Ross, Brande Sanderson, Deborah Sandlin, Janet Sansing-Cowan, Elizabeth Seale and Jennifer Selman.

Others are: Michael Severa, Laura Shoemaker,



Phi Theta Kappa officers are : Sarah Mayfield, Brandi Pennington, Rachel Finch, Jennifer Brooks and Yvonne Short.

Craig Skinner, Alex Skvortson, Karen Smith, Sabah Snoubar, Debbie Splinter, Reta Spradlin, Corrynn Stamp, Amanda Stanley, Crystal Stanley, Alisha Stockstill, Brent Sztrik, Seale and Jennifer Selman.

Others are: Michael Severa, Laura Shoemaker,

Craig Skinner, Alex Skvortson, Karen Smith, Sabah Snoubar, Debbie Splinter, Reta Spradlin, Corrynn Stamp, Amanda Stanley, Crystal Stanley, Alisha Stockstill, Brent Sztrik, Abigail Tibbetts, Adam Trumbauer and Jeanette Turner.

Also inducted are: Richard Tuz, Jessica Van Cleave, Jesse Vasquez, Shelley Verner, Todd Waldal, Jeanette Walker, Will Weaver, Lonile Ann Wells, Luther White, Gwyneth Wingfield, Katherine Wolford and Lauri Wynne.

Alpha Omicron officers are: President Rachel Finch, Scholarship Vice President Jennifer Brooks, Leadership Vice President Yvonne Short, Service Vice President Brandi Pennington, and Fellowship Vice President Sarah Mayfield.



Phi Theta Kappa honors 137 students this fall for outstanding achievement.

Phi Theta Kappa & Academic Transfer Scholarships

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**Candace Eldridge will be at
Tyler Junior College
Nov. 15 • 9:30 am-12:30 pm
Jenkins Hall**

**Visit Us on the Web:
www.tamu-commerce.edu**

THEA

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essay of about 300-600 words.

"You have total control over the THEA," Dr. Kelley said.

To prepare for the THEA, visit <http://64.58.198.112/thea/start/> for study materials. Click on "register," school number - "38979," school key - "ucvfe" and click "search." Input the requested information and click "submit." This will give access to take sample tests, learn strategies for taking THEA and learn ways to reduce anxiety.

Those who are tired of paying to take the test and not passing it, may choose from several opportunities. Those enrolled in Math 0303, Reading 0303 or English 0303 can access free QuickThea tests four days in

each long semester. The first two free tests will be given at 10 a.m. Saturdays, Nov. 13 and 20 in Jenkins Hall. Two other tests will be given at 2 p.m. Monday, Nov. 22 and 9 a.m. Tuesday, Nov. 23. Both tests will be administered in the Apache Rooms.

Students may register for the test in the Testing Center, on the second floor of Rogers Student Center, or in Jenkins or Potter halls at the sign-up tables. All examinees need to report 30 minutes before the posted testing time, Dr. Kelley said. Students will need to bring one of these: photo IDs, a TJC ID, driver's license or passport. They will also need to bring an admission ticket obtained when they register and two sharpened No. 2 pencils.

TJC will provide calcu-

lators so students do not need to bring their own. Testing aids such as markers or colored sheets will not be permitted.

Those who require special accommodations, must contact Bill Farnum at 903-510-2878 two weeks before the test date. Students should allow a total of six hours for testing and instructions. They only need to take sections of the exam that they have not previously taken or passed. For answers to any other questions, students should contact the Testing Center at 903-510-2389.

TJC News is seeking students interested in sports writing. Contact Journalism Department Chair Linda Zeigler 903-510-2335